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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Three Rhode Island Schools Named as Blue Ribbon Schools**

Three Rhode Island elementary schools were named as No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools of 2005, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced today.

The schools are:

- Agnes B. Hennessey School, in East Providence
- Chester W. Barrows School, in Cranston
- Forest Park Elementary School, in North Kingstown

The Hennessey School was honored for its dramatic improvements on the state assessments. The Chester Barrows and Forest Park Schools were honored because for exceptional performance on the state assessments. The three schools were nominated for the award last year by Education Commissioner Peter McWalters.

“The achievement gap is closing and that is great news for every student,” Secretary Spellings said. “These Blue Ribbon Schools are an example of what teachers and students can achieve. For the first time, we are insisting on results and accountability in return for our federal investment in education. In the three-plus years since No Child Left Behind was signed into law, we’ve learned a new equation: ‘Accountability plus high expectations plus resources equals results.’”

“For over two years, my administration has worked to help Rhode Island schools improve the quality of education they provide to our children,” Governor Donald L. Carcieri said. “By honoring the terrific accomplishments at Hennessey, Barrows, and Forest Park, this federal award recognizes the strides that we’ve made. These three Blue Ribbon Schools exemplify the best in Rhode Island education today. Teachers, administrators, students, and parents at Hennessey, Barrows, and Forest Park should be proud of this important accomplishment.”

“Being named a Blue Ribbon School is among the highest honors that a school can achieve,” said James A. DiPrete, chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “I am pleased for these schools, and I am proud that three Rhode Island public schools have received this prestigious recognition.”

“Over the past several years, Rhode Island schools have been challenged to meet high expectations, and these three schools have met the challenge,” said Education Commissioner McWalters. “As we continue on our goal of bringing all students to the level of proficiency, we will look to schools like Hennessey, Barrows, and Forest Park as examples of what can be accomplished through hard work and excellent instruction.”

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The No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools program recognizes schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels. This year, 295 schools will be recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools.

The public schools are selected based on one of two criteria:

- Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance on state tests;
- Schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests.

More information about the Blue Ribbon Schools program is available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html>